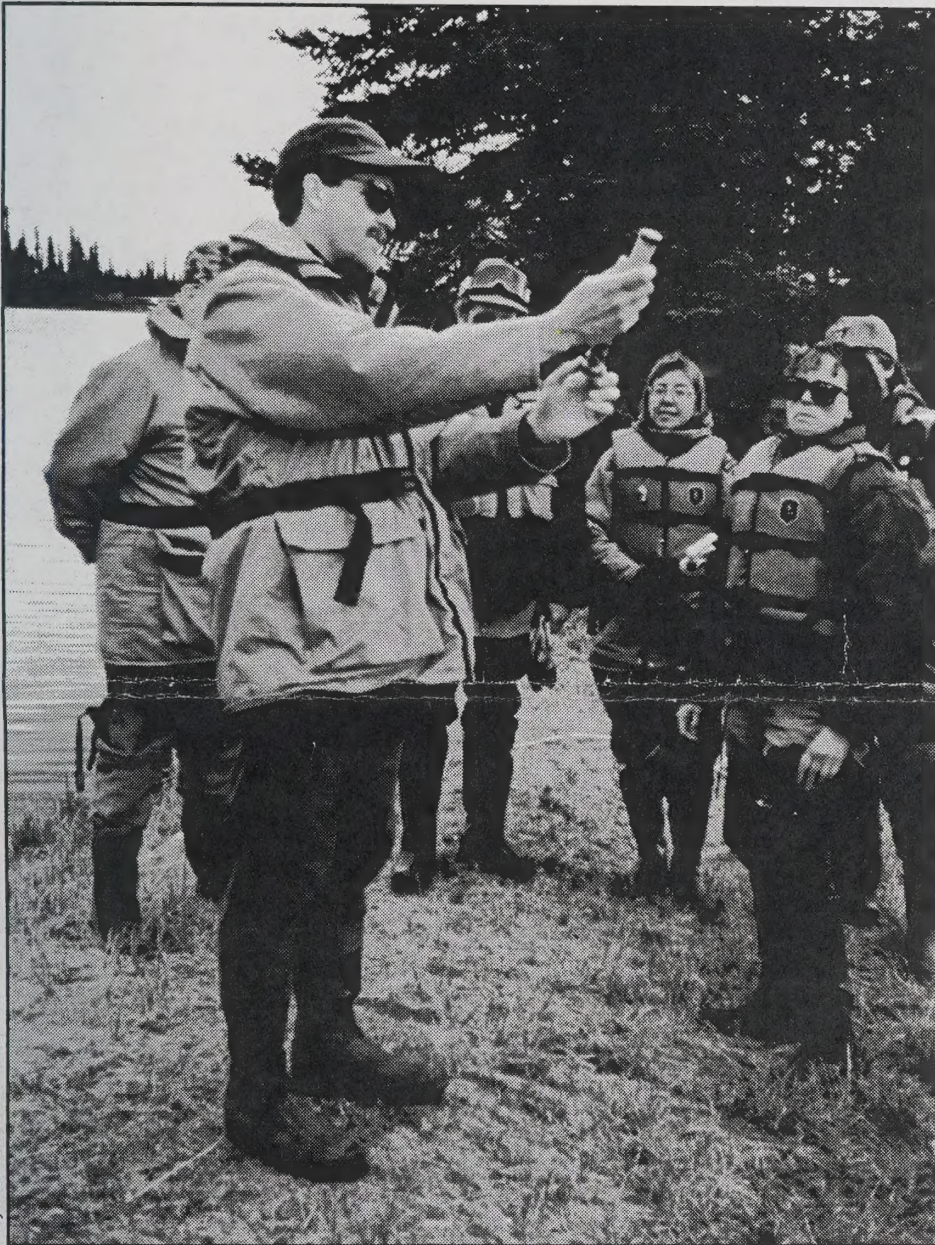


# ALASKA PEOPLE

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## Serious about boating safety



KJ Mushovic

Boating safety instructor Jake Schlapfer explains how to use flares to send a distress signal.

BLM Alaska takes safety seriously, especially when it comes to employees working on or near water.

Jake Schlapfer is BLM Alaska's lead boating safety instructor. He relies on a cadre of certified instructors to provide boating safety instruction to BLMers, as well as employees of other DOI agencies. Instructors include Eric Stoll, Dave Klein, Mike Wilson, Steve Sandy, David Mushovic, and BLM Alaska safety officer Mike Rose. "We've trained 45 Department of Interior employees since 1994," Schlapfer notes.

Alaska has three million lakes and more than 3,000 rivers, making certified BLM motorboat operators valuable assets to their teams. Schlapfer says many types of resource work in Alaska require boat access, such as monitoring recreation sites along rivers, habitat inventory and instream flow studies. He says DOI policy requires boating safety certification by anyone operating a boat on the job.

—KJ Mushovic



## The Battle of Big Lake

More than 200 Alaska BLM employees joined the battle against the disastrous Millers Reach fire near Wasilla.

The Alaska Interagency Fire Coordination Center (AIFCC), staffed by employees of the BLM Alaska Fire Service and the state Division of Forestry, coordinated the massive mobilization of firefighters, support personnel, equipment and supplies to the fire. BLM workers were immersed in the effort to contain the fire from the first day, when AFS smokejumpers arrived on the scene.

Several BLM employees are on the Type I incident management team that managed the fire, including Incident Commander Dave Liebersbach, a natural resource specialist with the Northern District. AIFCC Logistics Coordinator Dave Curry said that in addition to the smokejumpers, hotshot crews and other firefighters from BLM, about 110 BLMers from AFS, the Northern District, the State Office and Campbell Tract were sent out in overhead and support positions.

AIFCC responded to hundreds of requests for firefighting and support resources. In addition to Alaska resources, Curry said 19 hotshot crews, 529 overhead personnel, and 72 smokejumpers were brought up from the Lower 48. "Also, thousands of pounds of firefighting supplies and equipment were shipped to Alaska via truck and cargo aircraft," he said.

With about 350 structures destroyed, the Millers Reach fire was the most disastrous in Alaska's history; but it was only one of five "project" fires burning in Alaska at that time. At the peak, at least 2,300 people were engaged in the fire suppression effort, including more than 60 Alaska emergency firefighter crews.

"We've had some big mobilizations of Alaska resources to the Lower 48, but this is one of the largest in-state mobilizations I can remember," Curry said.

—Andy Williams

Rediscover Your Public Lands





**NEW FACES AT GDO**—The Glennallen District has brought aboard its annual summer help, nearly doubling the hands available in the district.

- The summer recreation crew is led by outdoor rec planner Marcia Butorac. A Glennallen resident, Butorac begins preparations for the season during the winter months, and stays on through late fall to stow equipment and prepare reports.

- Bob Frisbie joined the crew this year as a recreation maintenance worker. He will maintain district campgrounds and other facilities through fall.

- Outdoor rec planner John Geiger, a Student Conservation Association volunteer for the district in 1995, has returned.

- Outdoor rec planner Mark Nielsen worked several seasons in Alaska guiding for a private tour company.

- Rounding out the recreation crew are SCA volunteers Jeff Mariska, Chris Doolan, and Doug Dornelles.

Volunteer campground hosts are valuable assets to the recreation program. Hosts William and Janice Richter of Vacaville, California, are spending their summer at Paxson Lake Campground, while Jerry and Virginia Bennett, of Aurora, Colorado, are hosts at Tangle Lakes Campground.

The district is currently hosting two participants in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Field Internship Program. Pamela Herrera and John Olivas of New Mexico Highlands University are helping with monitoring and rehabilitation work, and will help Fish and Game personnel operate a fish weir on the Gulkana River.

**TIME IN A BOTTLE**—How old will you be in the year 2046? The BLM will be 100 years old (if it hasn't been merged into another agency!).

As part of the upcoming 50th anniversary celebration, two time capsules are being developed. One will be buried at the Anchorage

District Office. A second will be sent to the headquarters office in Washington, D.C. where BLM Alaska's contribution will be added to those sent from the other western states. These will be held in the Interior Department museum archives for safekeeping.

Alaska sent a shoebox full of BLM recreation brochures and Alaskana, including some placer gold, oil (from the Exxon Valdez oil spill), a 65-million-year-old hadrosaur dinosaur bone fragment from the Colville River, some 10,000-year-old woolly mammoth tusk fragments, a vial of volcanic ash from the 1992 Mt. Spurr eruption, some green jade (the Alaska state gem), and an Eskimo thimble.

The collection also features an actual piece of surplus pipe from the Trans Alaska pipeline. The piece was carved and painted by Fairbanks artist Gus Bystedt. It would be interesting to know whether the famous pipeline will be in operation 50 years from now.

**BIG LAKE BRINGS OUT THE BEST**—BLMers opened their hearts and their wallets to residents devastated by the Big Lake fire. This generosity can continue by giving to the non-profit organizations helping those residents rebuild their lives. The Combined Federal Campaign is a great way to help, and allows you to select the non-profit service organization of your choice. Look for more info from CFC coordinator Kathy Flippen during the September kick-off.

**KUDOS** —Mike Silva and Dan Burrows with the Alaska Fire Service recently received Good Neighbor Awards from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

The awards cited their work with the Northern Regional Office of the State Division of Land over the past four years to review fire protection levels for state land in northern Alaska.

"Together, we have reviewed the decade-old fire management plans

and were able to reduce fire protection levels on approximately two-million acres of state land. This has resulted in reduced fire suppression costs for the state at a time when reducing unnecessary expenditures is crucial," the citations read.

Silva is fire management officer for the Upper Yukon Fire Management Zone. Burrows is assistant fire management officer with the Tanana Fire Management Zone.

**MORE 50th FUN**—BLM 50th Anniversary employee picnics are just around the corner. Anchorage festivities will take place July 19, 3:30 - 7 p.m. at the CTF heliport. It will feature food, volleyball and stuff to keep the kiddies entertained. Get your tickets and don't forget to bring a dish to share.

Fairbanks folks will celebrate with a 50th picnic July 18 from 4-9 p.m. at Chena River State Recreation Area on University Avenue. The event includes a living history presentation by Joyce Badgely-Hunsaker at 7 p.m.

Hunsaker's performance will also be featured at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art July 19, 9:30 a.m., and at Townsite Day at the Anchorage Saturday Market July 20, 11 a.m.

All activities are open to current and retired BLMers and their friends and family members. Don't miss the fun during BLM's first and only 50th!

**TOUTING TUESDAY**—Tuesday is the most productive day of the week, according to a recent survey. Inter-Office Management, Inc., one of the nation's largest office suite companies, surveyed their clients and found Tuesday was their best day for accomplishing tasks. Over half the participants said 9:00 a.m. to noon was the most productive time of the day. And what did they name as the biggest obstacle to a productive day at the office? Interruptive phone calls.

So the next time you're tempted to phone a co-worker between 9:00 and 12 on a Tuesday, try e-mail instead!



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